

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 108284  
ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY:NEA:EGABINGTON:MAR

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

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FOR HIRSCH

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 3375 ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMMAN  
CAIRO DAMASCUS JERUSALEM DATED MAY 12:

QTE:LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEL AVIV 3375

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJECT: ELECTION PICTURE BECOMES MORE CLOUDY

1. ALTHOUGH IT HAS LONG BEEN THE CONSENSUS THAT THIS  
ELECTION IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN ANY OF ITS PREDECESSORS  
TO PREDICE (WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE 1973  
ELECTION), IN RECENT DAYS THE SITUATION HAS BECOME  
EVEN MURKIER. HOURNALISTS AND DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES,  
FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE LATELY BEEN BACKING AWAY FROM  
EARLY GUESSTIMATES ON THE NUMBER OF SEATS THE MAJOR  
PARTIES WILL WIN. THERE HAS EVEN BEEN A DISCERNIBLE  
RETREAT FROM THE CONVICTION THAT THE ALIGNMENT , NOT  
MATTER WHAT, WILL STILL EMERGE NUMBER ONE.

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2. THE IMPRESSION OF CHANGE HAS ARISEN INDEPENDENTLY  
OF THE RESULTS OF RECENT POLLS, BUT THESE HAVE NOW  
GIVEN SUBSTANCETO THE FEELING THAT PEOPLE ARE  
CHANGING THEIR MINDS OR AT LEAST RECONSIDERING.  
MAARIV TODAY CITED THREE POLLS WHICH, IN  
COMBINATION, FIVE A CONFUSED PICTURE INDEED.  
IT QUOTES FROM ISRAEL-GALLUP POLL, COMMISSIONED

BY THE DMC, THAT GIVES THE ALIGNMENT 38 SEATS; THE LIKUD 30 SEATS; AND THE DMC A SURPRISING 23 SEATS. THE OTHER 29 SEATS WERE DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE LESSER PARTIES IN NUMBERS WHICH MORE OR LESS AGREE WITH EARLIER POLLS.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, MAARIV ALSO PUBLISHED AN NRP-COMMISSIONED POLL WHICH PUT THE LIKUD IN FIRST PLACE WITH 33.2 PERCENT; GAVE THE ALIGNMENT 31.5 PERCENT; DMC - 9.4 PERCENT; AND THE NRP - 7.7 PERCENT. THE DMC POLL WAS COMPLETED MAY 6 AND WAS CONFINED TO URBAN AREAS. THE NRP POLL WAS TAKEN BETWEEN APRIL 24 AND MAY 1 AND DID NOT INCLUDE AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENTS OR ARABS. NO OTHER DETAILS WERE GIVEN.

4. ONLY ONE FIGURE WAS RELEASED CONCERNING A PRIVATE ALIGNMENT POLL: THE ALIGNMENT'S LEAD OVER THE LIKUD HAD SHRUNK TO ONE PERCENT. THEIR "FACT" WAS RELEASED LAST NIGHT BY MK YOSHI SARID, HEAD OF THE ALIGNMENT'S INFORMATION BUREAU AND THE KINGPIN IN THE ALIGNMENT'S PUBLICITY EFFORTS. HE REFUSED TO REVEAL ANY OTHER FIGURE FROM THE POLL, MERELY STATING THAT IT WOULD BE "A CLOSE RACE." A MAARIV JOURNALIST TOLD US THAT HE SUSPECTS SARID IS DISSEMINATING A FALSE FIGURE IN ORDER TO GALVANIZE COMPLACENT ALIGNMENT SUPPORTERS. WHETHER OR NOT THE RACE IS ACTUALLY THAT CLOSE, WE HAVE NOTICED A FADING OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BOUYANCY THAT HERETOFORE CHARACTERIZED ALIGNMENT ACTIVISTS.

5. BECAUSE OF THE CONTRADICTORY RESULTS, THE APPARENT RESTRICTED SAMPLES AND THE LACK OF INFORMATION ON THE POLL'S METHODOLOGIES, WE HESITATE TO READ TOO MUCH INTO THE RESULTS, NONE OF THE POLLS, FOR EXAMPLE, MENTIONED THE UNDECIDED VOTE WHICH OTHER POLLS SHOW AS A LARGE ELEMENT IN THEIR RESULTS. IT IS LIKELY THAT MOST OF THE UNDECIDED COME FROM AN ALIGNMENT BACKGROUND AND THAT THEIR INDECISION IS BETWEEN THE ALIGNMENT AND ANOTHER PARTY OTHER THAN THE LIKUD (MOST PROBABLY BETWEEN THE ALIGNMENT AND THE DMC). TAKEN TOGETHER, THE RESULTS OF THE ABOVE THREE POLLS POINT TO TWO TRENDS: A CONFUSING PICTURE AND A WEAKENING IN THE ALIGNMENT'S STRENGTH. IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE ALIGNMENT'S APPARENT LOSS IS PRIMARILY TO THE LIKUD OR THE DMC. IN ANY CASE,

THE LATTER TWO PARTIES ARE EXHIBITING NEW CONFIDENCE  
AS THE CAMPAIGN REACHED ITS CLIMAX.  
DUNNIGAN UNQTE  
CHRISTOPHER

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**TAGS:** PINT, IS  
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